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Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 61/142, the present report highlights national efforts taken to develop or strengthen national capacity on ageing, provides information on national, regional and global activities related to the first cycle of the review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and analyses the status of international cooperation with respect to assisting Member States in their efforts to develop their capacity to implement the Madrid Plan of Action. In its conclusion, the report offers a number of recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/142 of 19 December 2006, requested the Secretary-General to provide information on the commemoration of the five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in 2007, and to report to the Assembly at its sixty-second session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted in response to that request.

2. The report pays particular attention to the most recent national efforts in the area of capacity-building on ageing. The report also highlights some preliminary findings and lessons learned in this area during the first cycle of the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action. Owing to space constraints, the broad range of national experiences and practices can be only partially covered in the present report. It is expected that the remaining gaps may be filled at the forty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development when the present review and appraisal cycle is over. The report is based on the information received from Member States since February 2007 and on other sources available to the Secretariat.

II. National implementation activities

3. The preliminary information on the first five years of implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action provides evidence that national implementation activities have focused on a wide range of issues pertinent to ageing. Developing and building national capacity on ageing figures prominently on the agenda.[1] This section of the report provides information on implementation of national strategies or plans of action, including the efforts to mainstream the concerns of older persons into national development planning.

A. Institutional mechanisms

4. Since the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in 2002,[2] Member States have created or strengthened various institutional mechanisms to facilitate policy development in the area of ageing, including the establishment of agencies dealing with ageing issues within various government offices, national committees on ageing and specifically appointed focal points on ageing within the Government.

5. In 2003, Brazil established a national council for the rights of older persons made up equally of representatives of civil society and of the Government. In January 2007, the Prime Minister of Canada appointed a Secretary of State for Seniors who will work alongside the Minister for Human Resources and Social Development and help to bring greater attention to the needs of older persons. In

[1] The Secretary-General, in his report to the sixty-first session of the Assembly (A/61/167), outlined the components of national capacity development that are necessary in the context of implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, including institutional infrastructure and mechanisms; human resources; financial resources; research, data collection and analysis; and policy development.

[2] *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

September 2002, to implement the joint national plan for the older person, Chile created a national service for older people as a decentralized public office reporting to the President. The institution has an independent budget and aims at broadening public policies to promote the participation of older persons. In addition, a presidential advisory council on reform of the social security system has been created, with the tasks of collecting information on the situation of older persons and elaborating proposals to reform the national social security system.

6. In Finland, an older people's council exists in three fourths of all municipalities. In Indonesia, the responsibility for promoting the status of older persons was entrusted to the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1993. The institutional mechanism on ageing in Indonesia was strengthened by Presidential Decree No. 52/2004, which added national and regional commissions on ageing to assist the President in coordinating the implementation of national policies and programmes, as well as in rendering professional advice and formulating recommendations. In 2002, Mexico created a civic forum on ageing, which features the participation of civil society actors from both urban and rural areas. The forum strives to encourage older persons to become more active in society and to facilitate the interaction of relevant government agencies with civil society organizations in the area of ageing. New Zealand has established the Senior Citizens Advisory Council, an independent body that participates in the development of Government policy for older people by providing policy advice to the Minister for Senior Citizens. In Peru, a national network of older people was established. Its major objective is to implement the National Plan for Older Persons 2002-2006.

7. In Serbia, ageing-related policies have been carried out by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy and by other public entities dealing with various facets of ageing issues, primarily in the area of social protection and health. Local community governments in Serbia are the leaders in planning and implementing local policy actions on ageing, with more than one third of the 165 local governments actively involved in the process. In Sweden, county councils and municipalities have set up older persons' advisory committees, as well as other local institutions to promote older persons' participation, including through meetings between politicians and representatives of organizations of older persons to exchange information. The Government also has a regular committee at the national level for conducting discussions and exchanging information with organizations for older persons. In 2003, Uganda set up a cross-ministerial, multisectoral working group with the task of mainstreaming ageing into health and nutrition policy. Representatives of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, as well as of two local non-governmental organizations, participated in the group's deliberations. Within the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, a ministerial post exists for ageing and disability. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the national age care organization coordinates the work of various organizations involved in care for older persons.

B. National policy frameworks

8. Adopting a specific strategy or plan aimed at older persons highlights the importance of ageing in the context of national social policy. Existence of a plan on ageing helps to identify priorities and guide policy implementation, facilitating

subsequent legal or regulatory activities to benefit older persons, and to address the challenges and opportunities of population ageing in a country.

9. Older persons have been identified as a vulnerable group within the National Strategic Development Plan of Cambodia for 2006-2010. In 2006, China started implementation of the eleventh five-year plan for the development of undertakings for the elderly (2006-2010) and published a white paper on the plan. Despite challenges and constraints in existing pension and health insurance systems, China nevertheless adheres to the people-centred principle of continuing to improve social protection and safeguard the fundamental interests of older persons. In Finland, where the provision of services for older persons remains the responsibility of municipalities, 80 per cent of all municipalities have prepared a strategic policy paper on ageing designed by multi-stakeholder committees. In 2003, Indonesia set up the national action plan for elderly persons' welfare, covering the years of 2003-2008, while a medium-term national development plan for 2004-2009 specified that older persons must benefit from protection and social welfare efforts. Japan formulated the General Principles Concerning Measures for the Ageing Society, including such sectors as work and income, health and welfare, learning and social participation, and the living environment, which served as a fundamental and comprehensive set of guidelines for the Government to follow.

10. The Lao People's Democratic Republic approved the first national policy for the elderly in 2005. The sixth national Socio-economic Development Plan (2006-2010) also addresses the issues related to older persons in the context of social security and proposes an improved pension scheme for retired government officials. Lithuania approved a national ageing strategy in June 2004, with two priority targets: income guarantees for older persons and employment of older persons. The strategy also envisages the participation of older persons in addressing their own concerns. Malawi has formulated a national strategy for older persons whose objective is to increase older peoples' productivity, independence and active involvement in the development of their communities and the country. Mali adopted a national plan on ageing in 2005 and is now working with specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to implement it. Mexico included objectives and actions based on the Madrid Plan of Action in the national strategy for social development, which draws attention to equity and equality throughout the life-course, from infancy to old age. In Mongolia, the National Programme on the Health and Social Welfare of the Elderly (2004-2008) adheres to the main principles of the Madrid Plan of Action.

11. A strategy called "Health of Older People" was developed in New Zealand by an expert advisory group in consultation with older people. It identifies key objectives and actions to be undertaken by policymakers, service funding agencies, planners and providers to achieve identified goals by 2010. Qatar prepared a national plan of action for older persons, which will cover the period 2008-2013. In Serbia, a partnership between the Government and non-governmental organization networks facilitated the development of a national action plan on ageing. The national action plan on ageing has also been integrated into the poverty reduction strategy paper, which is essential for its implementation. Thailand is implementing the Second National Plan for Older Persons (2002-2021), which focuses on the preparation for "quality ageing" by promoting the well-being of older persons, including through social security measures, and on research to support policy and programme formulation. In South Africa, a recently adopted plan of action on

ageing has been translated into legislation. The plan focuses on community-based care and social protection of older persons, and ensures that older persons remain in the community with their rights respected. In 2003, the United Republic of Tanzania put into place the National Ageing Policy to guide implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. The Government has also taken steps to review and scale up the provision of pensions for older persons.

C. Legal and regulatory action

12. Many countries passed specific legislation geared at promoting social inclusion and the well-being of older persons. Regulatory and legal mechanisms were established, providing a basis for further action and serving to increase the range and scope of social services aimed at older persons.

13. A special law — *Estatuto do Idoso do Brazil* — was adopted for older persons in Brazil. In Chile, a draft law was elaborated, which sought to amend the law on intra-family violence, including older persons as specific, vulnerable subjects and designating their abuse as a form of domestic violence. The Government was also creating mechanisms for social protection in order to guarantee the rights of older persons. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea passed a law on the care of the elderly in 2007. The law addresses such issues as support and care, health services and cultural and social activities for older persons. Ecuador (ley especial del anciano en Ecuador), Mexico (law on the rights of older persons), Paraguay (ley de las personas adultas en Paraguay), Peru (ley que incluye la atención preferencial de las personas mayores) and Uruguay (ley de promoción integral de los adultos mayores en Uruguay) adopted legislative acts to promote the equality of older persons, employment in satisfactory conditions and improvements in the area of economic security; fair access to health services and the supply of medicines; regulation of the provision of long-term care; and measures against abuse or neglect of older persons.

14. South Africa enacted the Older Persons Act No. 13 of 2006, which paved the way for the inclusion of protection measures, the prioritization of services and the upgrading of the quality of services to older persons. In February 2007, fundamental reforms of the system of retirement provisions were announced, geared at preventing and alleviating poverty during old age. Spain recently approved a new law to promote personal autonomy and care for dependent people to assist vulnerable persons in need of help in their daily living activities so that they can attain greater personal autonomy and enjoy full civil rights.

D. Social protection programmes and care services

15. In 2003 in Argentina, non-contributory pensions were extended to all individuals age 70 and over who were not receiving a pension or retirement payment, had insufficient monetary income and whose families were unable to provide adequate support. In 2006, the Social Security System Inclusion Programme (Programa de Inclusión Previsional) was established. In Bangladesh, national poverty eradication policies specifically target older persons, and the old age allowance programme has recently increased coverage, with approximately 1.6 million out of 5 million older persons age 60 and above receiving the benefit. In

2002, Bolivia established the supportive bond (bono solidario, or Bonosol) that provides monetary income to people over 65 years old as part of a more complex institutional framework that includes integral attention and promotes active ageing and the rights of older persons. Bolivia recently established free medical insurance for older persons without social security coverage. The human rights of older persons are at the heart of Brazilian policymaking aimed at implementing the Madrid Plan of Action. Recent measures have included the regulation of nursing homes and the provision of interstate rights for using public transportation. In addition, the Rural Workers' Assistance Fund (FUNRURAL) grants pensions to older persons in rural areas who lack retirement rights and have insufficient material resources.

16. To improve the quality of life of older persons, Canada implemented the Tax Fairness Plan, which benefited seniors by increasing the tax shelter for persons over 65 years of age. In November 2006, amendments to the legislation governing public pensions were introduced. Partnering with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Public Health Agency of Canada coordinates efforts to determine best practices for the inclusion of older persons in emergency preparedness planning, emergency response and recovery. In Chile, the national fund for older persons was created in 2003 to finance civil society initiatives involving older persons. The Government has also implemented preventive measures to avoid unnecessary institutionalization of older persons. The measures include consultations at home by teams of primary health-care workers and training and community support for caregivers. A stipend is given to persons who qualify as poor and who are being taken care of by their families.

17. The pension reform of 2005 in Finland shifted pension entitlements towards later stages of working persons' careers. A flexible retirement age has been set between 63 and 68 years, while the age of early retirement was changed from 60 to 62 years. Incentives to delay retirement were introduced, including a sharply increasing rate of accumulation in the pension for those staying at work beyond the age of 64. The Government of Indonesia, in the context of ensuring the protection of older persons' basic human rights, recently implemented pilot projects in five provinces to address the needs of bedridden older persons. In Japan, a subsidy to employers has been introduced, instituting a system that permits employees to continue working after their retirement or to postpone their retirement. Amendments have been introduced to the national pension law, including an indexing mechanism, which would allow employers to take into account the changes in the old-age dependency ratio.

18. Mexico created a human development opportunities programme, which helps families that live in extreme poverty realize their potential and enhance their options to attain higher levels of well-being through improved education, health and nutrition. A component of the overall programme targets older persons age 70 and above living with their families, providing a monthly grant to cover the costs of medical services to older persons.

19. The Government of New Zealand announced the introduction of a Supergold card for seniors in August 2007. The card offers easy access to public sector entitlements and local government services. Cardholders will also be able to use their card to enjoy commercial discounts with participating businesses. In Sweden, a general tax credit for earned income — the "job tax credit" — has been introduced.

To increase the economic incentive to work longer, there is a higher tax credit for those over 65 compared to other age groups. A maintenance support for the elderly act, intended for persons 65 years and older whose basic needs are not satisfied through other benefits in the national pension system, came into force in January 2007. In Zambia, efforts are being made by the Government to address the needs and concerns of older persons by enhancing inclusion, empowerment, participation and improved social protection measures. Specific measures include waiving fees for health-care services and establishing home-care services. Public welfare assistance reached 115,000 older persons in 2005.

E. Development of human resources

20. The development of human resources is a key element in any capacity-building effort. It encompasses investment in formal training for the acquisition of skills as well as facilitation of informally sharing already existing skills.

21. In Brazil, the prevention of abuse and violence against older persons is a key focus of specialized training programmes to prevent social exclusion and violence. Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Programme funds community-based projects in which older persons can share their skills, knowledge and experience with others. The programme has funded over 1,700 projects across the country. Cuba adopted a comprehensive programme for older persons, which has promoted training in geriatrics and gerontology and the creation of 432 gerontology teams.

22. In Finland, the comprehensive training of nurses is a particular innovation aimed at responding in a holistic way to both the health-care and other assistance needs of older persons. Nurses with special skills are becoming the leading frontline professionals in health-care services for older persons. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Health established an elderly health-care programme under which health personnel receive training in providing care to older people. The Government has also provided various opportunities for information and communication technologies retraining and lifelong education as well as job placements to enable older persons to be economically productive. In Mongolia, the Gerontology Centre was established in 2005 by the Government under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health to provide training activities in the field of ageing and to conduct research on ageing issues. In Thailand, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has recently piloted a project on home care for the elderly, 2003-2004 to provide training to home-care workers. The objective is to train volunteers in home care for the elderly and strengthen the capacity of community and village volunteers to be able to take care of older persons to enable them to lead a normal life in their families and in their communities.

F. Participatory bottom-up review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action

23. Following the decisions of the Commission for Social Development, the bottom-up participatory approach will be used to review and appraise the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action at the national level. The participation of older persons in the process of qualitative policy evaluation will enhance the potential for obtaining reliable data through quantitative censuses and surveys. In

addition, participation in reviewing and appraising policies on ageing could empower older persons to contribute more to the political process from a grass-roots perspective.

24. New Zealand has already accumulated experience in bottom-up evaluation of some of its national policies that could be shared with other interested Member States. The Centre for Social Research and Evaluation of the Ministry of Social Development started a research project that included fieldwork and used a case-study approach with interviews with older people living in the community. The project is investigating the factors that support people to age in place and will identify how Government can best support that process. Another project on improving the safety of older pedestrians explores the perceptions and needs of older people through their participation in focus groups and also incorporates the perspectives of professionals who are in a position to improve road safety for the growing population group of older people. A representative sample of community-dwelling adults aged 55 to 70 years will be surveyed over time by postal questionnaires and interviews, with follow-up every second year. The Office for Senior Citizens regularly consults with older people in the community through a network of 39 volunteer community coordinators. The volunteers programme, which was established in 1999 during the International Year of Older Persons, brings together people from different cultures, backgrounds and community organizations to participate in projects that contribute to policy development. The volunteer community coordinators network provides a key link between the community, the Office for Senior Citizens and the Minister for Senior Citizens.

G. The scope of national efforts: preliminary findings

25. Since the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002, Member States have made remarkable progress in developing capacity on ageing by creating a legal basis and institutional mechanisms, social protection programmes and care services as well as by developing human resources to address demographic ageing. The evidence suggests that those steps are essential and should complement each other. Careful planning and sequencing of steps is of paramount importance: without reliable data, adequate institutional infrastructure and the cooperation of stakeholders, policies developed for older persons can hardly be effective. For example, a lack or a shortage of trained personnel makes it difficult to implement an adopted plan, strategy or national policies. In addition, adequate funding to support implementation measures is required for legislation to become operational. Periodic evaluation to measure the effectiveness of laws, policies and programmes is an indispensable part of any successful policy process. In the context of developing capacity, Member States have set specific goals and topical priorities that differ from country to country. Careful analysis of the most pressing needs of older persons is a necessary prerequisite in making decisions with respect to identifying areas for action that would be most important.

26. The capacity-development policies presented in the preceding sections of the report contain pertinent information for Member States that have only partially engaged in capacity development for older persons. There are several lessons that have been learned in the last five years. Focal points on ageing, set up at the national level as an integral part of various government ministries or departments or as a separate independent entity, have played an essential role in carrying out ageing

policies. A competent and devoted national focal point on ageing with clearly defined responsibilities can and should have a say within a government structure and effectively lobby policymakers on issues pertaining to older persons, including the setting of priorities and the allocation of funds. In addition to advocacy functions, a focal point can serve as a coordinator, repository of information, spokesperson on ageing matters and a link between Government and civil society. The role and functions of focal points should be clarified at the onset of their establishment to avoid confusion and duplication of effort. Obstacles to success of focal points often relate to a lack of interest in ageing and/or ignorance of the issues at the national level as well as to their inadequate financial base.

27. National laws and regulations that ensure the individual rights of older persons in a variety of areas are an indispensable part of the institutional machinery, providing a legal basis for the process of empowerment and ensuring more comprehensive social policies that are better attuned to the needs of older persons. Formerly, it was expected that the Government alone would decide on priorities. It is increasingly being recognized that a more participatory approach is advisable, in particular one that involves older persons themselves. The involvement of all segments of society is of special significance for the adoption of non-discriminatory policies and practices. Providing a "space" or permanent forum for dialogue between Government and representatives of civil society is crucial to ensure that the opinions of older persons as well as representatives of the academic community and other stakeholders are heard. A more inclusive policy process that envisions government entities as proactively encouraging and facilitating participation by citizens enhances the reach, effectiveness and legitimacy of the adopted policies, and facilitates the realization of internationally agreed goals and human rights commitments. Views of older persons together with evidence provided by the experts in the field of ageing can clarify immediate concerns and necessary areas for further action, including the provision of funds for ageing-related programmes.

28. In both developed and developing countries a strong emphasis should be placed on health promotion at all stages of life to minimize the risks for chronic disease. This is, by far, the most cost-effective strategy that can be undertaken. Heart problems, diabetes, hypertension and obesity, the most potentially disabling diseases and risk factors, are often interrelated, and in many cases they can be prevented or minimized through behaviour changes. The consequences of not implementing effective prevention programmes can be grave even though they are often underestimated.

29. Family remains the main caregiver in developing and developed countries alike. However, the nature of family support may differ in essential ways, depending on national circumstances: from hands-on care in some countries to emotional and psychological support in countries offering more generous public services. Family support is usually consistent with the wishes of older persons themselves, who above all else wish to avoid nursing homes and other forms of institutionalization. Government help to provide support to family caregivers makes good sense in providing for current and future ageing populations. There are different types and levels of family support that can be adopted in national circumstances, ranging from the simple provision of information to the provision of long-term care insurance under national social protection systems. A synergy is needed between informal and formal care.

30. Severe opportunity costs and trade-offs for women, who constitute the large majority of caregivers, need to be recognized. To the extent that women cannot enter the labour force because of their caregiving responsibilities, they may be potentially prone to poverty-stricken old age for themselves owing to a lack of employment income and pension credits. Countries that seek substantial labour force participation must provide services for the care of both children and older persons. Nursing home and other forms of institutional care are usually viewed as the opposite of family care; however, they should be seen as part of a continuum; there are times when there is no other recourse than nursing home placement. Where the industry is well-regulated and monitored, residential care can provide high standards of care and protection. In some countries, nursing homes are extending their services by organizing the provision of community care or by providing day or respite care. An important lesson for developing countries is to avoid repeating the mistakes of some more affluent countries that simply built a lot of institutions for older persons. In many cases community care is a more effective solution. Even in cases where there is no recourse but to institutionalize, such efforts should be adapted to the local culture and not just follow previously established patterns. Homes organized around a village community concept, for example, may be much more welcoming than some of the hospital-style nursing homes.

31. An increasingly important issue is where one finds qualified staff to perform long-term care functions. Increasingly, developed countries are importing medical and caregiving staff from developing countries, often placing a strain on health-care provision in the latter. It is not infrequent in developing nations for older persons to be left behind while daughters migrate to the developed world to become long-term care providers. Some of this migration is undocumented, raising issues about the quality of care that results from a lack of training and supervision. Globalization of the long-term care workforce entails both opportunities and risks to sending and receiving countries and is an issue deserving more attention and international collaboration.

32. The most important policy interventions mentioned by Member States in their submissions and in other relevant national material reflect the priorities identified five years ago in the Madrid Plan of Action: providing adequate income support, health care and long-term care, transportation and employment for older persons; enabling their political participation, social involvement and active contribution to the development of their communities; preparing for emergency situations and battling abuse that may affect older persons; and training health-care providers in gerontology and geriatrics. Periodic evaluation of the results and of unintended policy outcomes will allow for adjustment of adopted policies and programmes.

33. Positive practices from all over the world show that since the time of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, forward-looking policy planning and broad-based implementation with the participation of all stakeholders, combined with effective monitoring and evaluation, have been pivotal in achieving successful and lasting outcomes in areas specific to ageing. The setting of achievable goals is as important as the selection of appropriate policy tools. A visionary yet realistic approach and the adoption of evidence-based policies supported by the provision of sufficient financial resources are necessary ingredients for achieving a higher quality of life for older persons.

III. International cooperation in support of the development of national capacity

34. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has continued implementation of the Development Account project entitled "Capacity-building to integrate older persons in development goals and frameworks through the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing". The initial activity under the project, involving the countries of Cameroon, Grenada, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Trinidad and Tobago, and Senegal, was a project workshop held in Bangkok from 9 to 12 December 2006. The aim of the workshop was to introduce participants to the objectives of the project and set out the framework for activities in 2007. As a follow-up, technical assistance in the area of ageing was provided to the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Development in Senegal in May 2007. A joint mission by the Department and the subregional office of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Trinidad and Tobago was fielded to Grenada in June 2007 with the purpose of undertaking a needs assessment and analysis of the situation of the policy on ageing in that country, including proposals for project follow-up. The Department, in cooperation with the regional office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Bratislava, undertook a needs assessment mission to Armenia in April 2007 to provide advice and recommendations on how the Government could develop a national strategy on ageing, including a comprehensive needs assessment and an awareness-raising campaign.

35. In June 2007, the Department, in cooperation with the International Institute on Ageing, organized an expert group meeting policies on ageing at the national level: challenges of capacity development in Malta. The expert group meeting was convened in the context of work currently being undertaken by the Department on the preparation of a guide for national implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

36. The United Nations Population Fund is being called upon more often at the country level to assist in the development of policies and programmes on ageing. The Fund's regional office in Bratislava and the Economic Commission for Europe jointly organized in Chisinau a training workshop on ageing — a challenge and an opportunity — for the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, from 13 to 16 March 2007. The objectives were to improve the understanding of how to identify and analyze challenges and opportunities related to ageing and provide guidance for drafting country reports on national follow-up to the Madrid Plan of Action. In China, the UNFPA office is providing support for a review and participatory appraisal of the implementation of the existing Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly, which is scheduled to be revised in 2007. In Romania, UNFPA is working with parliamentarians to raise awareness of population issues, including ageing, and to devise activities for the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Funding has been provided by UNFPA to support the International Institute on Ageing in Malta, including training courses for policymakers organized by the Institute.

37. The International Labour Organization (ILO) deals with issues of ageing in the context of its various programmes, particularly social protection programmes. The

global report in follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, entitled *Equality at Work: Tackling the Challenges*,[3] was presented at the 2007 session of the International Labour Conference. The 2009 session of the Conference will focus on employment and social protection in the new demographic context.

38. During the period 2006-2007, HelpAge International continued and extended its work on the citizen participatory monitoring project whereby older persons have received training and support to engage their own Governments on ageing policy and the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, focusing on the delivery of age-based entitlements to income and health care in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Ethiopia, India and Kenya. HelpAge publicized the methodology of the monitoring processes through its website and publications. At the present time, HelpAge is working with delegations of older people from at least 21 countries on the International Day of Older Persons. They will meet with their Governments and raise concerns and requests for implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. Further work in 2007/2008 will focus on cooperation with the African Union and the United Nations in expanding social protection in Africa.

IV. Regional activities

39. As stated in the Madrid Plan of Action, the regional commissions have a responsibility for translating the plan into their regional action plans; it was further stressed that they should, upon request, assist national institutions in implementing and monitoring their actions on ageing. The Madrid Plan of Action also stated that the Economic and Social Council could strengthen the capacity of the regional commissions in this respect.[4]

40. In its resolution 44/1, the Commission for Social Development requested the regional commissions to identify appropriate modalities for conducting the regional review and appraisal, encouraged the convening of regional review and appraisal activities, and invited interested Governments to offer support and assistance, including voluntary financial contributions, to support national action in the context of the regional implementation and the convening of regional review and appraisal activities and events.

41. It is also expected that the regional commissions, in accordance with the preceding request of the Commission for Social Development, will forward the findings of the first review and appraisal, along with identified priorities for future action regarding the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, to the Commission for Social Development at its forty-sixth session in 2008.

42. Three regional conferences to review and appraise the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action will be conducted in the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (Leon, Spain, 6-8 November 2007), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (Brasilia, Brazil, 4-6 December 2007) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (Macao, China,

[3] Report of the Director-General, International Labour Conference, Ninety-sixth Session, report I (B) (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2007).

[4] *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 128.

9-11 October 2007) regions thanks to the support offered by the Governments of Spain, Brazil and China, respectively. Preparatory processes are under way in those three regions, including meetings of experts and preparatory consultations of stakeholders. The regional commissions, in accordance with their mandates and within available resources, are following different scenarios for promoting capacity development on ageing as well as for the review and appraisal of the Plan of Action. The information below highlights some efforts undertaken in those areas.

43. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), following the reorganization in 2006 that placed human and social development activities within the Human and Social Development Section of the African Centre for Gender and Social Development, is now in a better position to give wider attention to the issue of ageing in the region. The Commission addresses the issue of ageing through its work on HIV/AIDS and gender, where an increasing number of grandparents, particularly grandmothers, are being left to care for orphans of the pandemic in addition to losing the support they counted on from their children in old age — a situation that has caused serious social and economic problems for older persons and children. The Commission is preparing a comprehensive report on ageing in Africa. That report, together with several case reports from selected countries based on the bottom-up approach, will be discussed by an expert group meeting in 2007 with the aim of producing a consolidated report on the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in Africa.

44. The Economic Commission for Europe held a meeting of focal points on ageing in Segovia, Spain, in November 2006 to assist Governments in conducting the review and appraisal exercise of both the Madrid Plan of Action and the regional implementation strategy. The Commission and the Government of Austria also organized a joint meeting of the expert group and the task force on monitoring the regional implementation strategy, in Vienna, in February 2007. The task force is providing expert advice to the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the 2007 Ministerial Conference on Ageing, to be held in León, Spain, from 6 to 8 November 2007. Finally, from 12 to 13 July 2007, ECE held a meeting in Geneva of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. The open-ended intergovernmental committee will decide on the content and modalities of the Conference.

45. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has provided technical assistance on ageing to a number of countries in the region, including in the elaboration of a national policy on ageing, through an inclusive process involving all stakeholders. With the assistance of UNFPA and the Government of Italy, ECLAC has completed a study on future scenarios in ageing policies in Chile, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Uruguay. In Brazil, ECLAC supported the national council for the rights of older persons in the elaboration of priorities in implementing the national statute on the rights of older persons. As a result of that process, a plan of action for implementation that reflects the priorities agreed is to be produced. Technical assistance was also provided to the institutes on ageing in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. The Commission has produced a manual of indicators on quality of life in old age, which will be distributed to all regional stakeholders working on issues of ageing. In addition, a set of baseline indicators on ageing are being elaborated in 20 countries of the region to reveal the sociodemographic characteristics of the ageing population between 1990 and 2000. A number of workshops were organized, at both the

national and regional levels, on the issue of quality of life indicators in old age. The Commission is also working to integrate issues of ageing into work taking place within ECLAC in a variety of sectoral areas. For instance, a study regarding the health of older persons has been inserted into a Development Account project entitled "Interregional cooperation to strengthen social inclusion, gender equality and health promotion in the Millennium Development Goal process". The Commission also issued a guide for the preparation of country reports on the application of the regional strategy for the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean. The guide is provided to national bodies on ageing to support countries in the elaboration of the reports that they will present in the second regional intergovernmental conference on ageing.

46. In the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) region, funding for international assistance to support national capacity development on ageing has been scarce. Only a few Governments in the region cite ageing as a priority. The population is still predominately young.[5] However, in a number of countries in the region, such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, where the demographic transition is starting to have an impact, ageing is moving to the forefront of policies and programmes in the social area. Although some progress has been made in policy development and mainstreaming, the prevailing approach to ageing still tends to favour welfare- and service-based policies and programmes. Cross-sectoral coordination of the policies and programmes that do exist remains a daunting task (see E/ESCWA/SDD/2007/Technical Material.2). ESCWA is also considering the organization of a regional meeting in connection with the first cycle of the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

47. During the period 2004-2005, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific concentrated on carrying out research and national training workshops to identify modalities for conducting the review and appraisal exercise that is appropriate for the region. Guidelines and indicators have been developed, and training has been conducted for Government officials and national partners. Within that context, the National Training Workshop on Tracking Progress to Improve Health Care Needs of Older Persons was held in Jakarta in August 2005 to contribute to the development of a national bottom-up appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action to supplement statistical surveys in the areas of long-term care and well-being in old age. In addition, indicators and other assessment tools were developed to measure the impact of social protection and health-care policies and programmes.

48. An expert group meeting on setting the agenda of the high-level meeting of the regional review of the implementation of the Shanghai implementation strategy for the Madrid and Macao plans of action on ageing was organized by ESCAP and held in Shanghai in June 2006. That meeting aimed to help in the review and appraisal process and focused on ageing and development issues. The participants also developed a provisional agenda for the high-level meeting.

49. In addition, the Expert Group Meeting on the Regional Preparations for the Global Review of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing took place in Bangkok in March 2007 and focused on developing supportive environments. The participants

[5] See *World Population Policies, 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.XIII.5).

also revisited the bottom-up review process and clarified the role of national focal points in the process. The high-level meeting on the regional review of the Madrid Plan of Action will take place in Macao in October 2007.

V. Global activities

50. The Commission for Social Development started the first review and appraisal cycle of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing during its forty-fifth session in 2007 by conducting a plenary debate and a panel discussion on progress and challenges in the area of ageing since the adoption of the Madrid Plan of Action in 2002. During the plenary debate, the delegations presented the initial review of their national actions taken since the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002, including the identification of priorities in their efforts to implement the Madrid Plan of Action. Several Member States presented their national reports, describing national implementation measures taken since 2002. The individual country reports are available on the website of the United Nations Programme on Ageing (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/review_map.html).

51. During the interactive panel convened at the forty-fifth session of the Commission, the panellists emphasized that the impacts of ageing on societies are widespread, holding important implications for, among other things, economic growth, health-care systems, social protection measures, the labour market, families and communities, and globalization. It was stressed that links needed to be strengthened between the Madrid Plan of Action and key international policy objectives, such as poverty reduction strategies, the Millennium Development Goals, the decent work agenda and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Such linkages would also help to mainstream ageing into the policy discourse.

52. Three fundamental areas were highlighted at the panel discussion. The first involves financial security, either in the form of non-contributory social pensions or more traditional contributory social protection schemes, so that older persons have a regular income on which to live. Rather than being viewed as a cost, social pensions should be viewed as an important investment in development, one which pays dividends to families, communities and the overall economy. The second deals with health promotion, including an emphasis on preventive care and effective management of chronic conditions, as well as on adequate training of health-care providers in geriatric medicine and an expansion of home-care services and support to family caregivers. Healthy ageing not only enhances the quality of a person's life, but is also far more cost-effective and less of a strain on public health systems. The third area addresses issues of participation and empowerment of older persons so that they can have a meaningful voice in the policies and programmes that affect them, rather than being sidelined and subject to discrimination. Organizations of older persons can provide an entry point for engaging in policy dialogue and also help to ensure that people receive the benefits and services to which they are entitled. A general consensus among the panellists was that successful implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, particularly in developing countries, hinges on the development of national capacity in carrying out ageing policies. To that end, Governments in developed countries, civil society and international organizations can assist in providing training and advisory services during the review and appraisal process.

53. In addition to the plenary discussion and interactive panel, numerous side events took place, highlighting the issues of ageing and older persons from various social policy perspectives: for instance, the Global Ageing Programme of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), in collaboration with the United Nations Programme on Ageing, organized a briefing series on recent major developments and trends in such areas as income security for older people; health and ageing; and the empowerment of older persons and creation of enabling environments.

54. In the context of the commemoration of the Madrid Plan of Action, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has devoted the sixtieth edition of its flagship publication, the *World Economic and Social Survey, 2007: Development in an Ageing World*,[6] to analyses of the implications of ageing for social and economic development around the world. The report addresses the issues of relationships between demographic ageing and economic and social situation in various parts of the world, as well as the place and role of older persons in societies at different stages of development.

55. Numerous activities and events on ageing have been conducted or are being planned around the world to address a number of priority issues included in the Madrid Plan of Action, thus providing useful input to the independent assessment of its implementation. For example, the International Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing (IAHSA) organized its seventh international conference in Malta in June 2007 around the central theme, "Quality transcends borders: innovations in leadership, technology and design". Demographic change and its effect on the labour market and social security, health issues, the development of new products and markets and changing lifestyles in society are the topics on the agenda of the third World Ageing and Generations Congress, organized by the World Demographic Association at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland. The International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) is conducting in 2007 a series of regional conferences, including the sixth European Congress of Gerontology in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation and the eighth Asia/Oceania Regional Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics in Beijing. The Congress in St. Petersburg is being organized within the framework of the Research Agenda on Ageing for the Twenty-First Century, a joint project of the United Nations Programme on Ageing and the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics aimed at supporting the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action.

VI. Recommendations for further action

56. On the basis of the information available to the Secretariat, the present report provides an overview of some national, regional and global activities related to the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in the midst of the first cycle of its review and appraisal. The conclusions of the first cycle of the review and appraisal will be drawn by the Commission for Social Development at its forty-sixth session in February 2008. **In this connection, the General Assembly may wish to recommend to the Commission to focus the deliberations of its forty-sixth session in 2008 on the outcomes of the first cycle of the review and appraisal, including identifying progress made and obstacles encountered during the first**

[6] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.07.II.C.1.

five years of the implementation process, as well as selecting priorities for further implementation activities. In addition, the General Assembly may wish to remind Member States to actively participate in the participatory bottom-up approach of the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, through, inter alia, the sharing of ideas, data collection and best practices, and reporting on them to the forty-sixth session of the Commission in 2008.

57. Given the key role that the regional commissions are playing in consolidating the national findings of the review and appraisal, regional aspects of the review and appraisal process should be featured prominently at the Commission's session in 2008. **This could be achieved through, inter alia, organization of a special panel with participation of high-level representatives from the regional commissions, and representatives of organizations of older persons from various regions that are directly involved in the participatory bottom-up review and appraisal exercise.**

58. Given the continuing significance of national capacity for implementing the Madrid Plan of Action, **the Assembly may wish to recommend to Member States to redouble their implementation efforts on developing national capacity to address the national implementation priorities identified during the review and appraisal exercise. Member States, which have not done so, may wish to consider a step-by-step approach to developing capacity or to fill gaps to strengthen particular elements within their national capacity. Such a step-by-step approach would include the setting of national priorities, the strengthening of institutional mechanisms, research, data collection and analysis, and the training of necessary personnel in the field of ageing. A strong focus on legislation and subsequent policy and programme development to implement national objectives, as well as periodic quantitative and qualitative evaluation of policy implementation should be encouraged.**

59. **The General Assembly may also wish to request the Secretary-General to prepare a strategic implementation framework based on an analysis of national activities since 2002 to provide identification of policy priorities for the future. In addition, such a framework could include the identification of measures for international cooperation to support national implementation activities.**